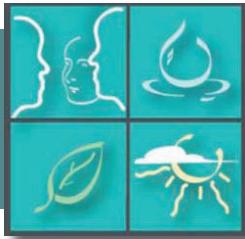




# Facilitating Brownfields Projects



Successful brownfields projects are collaborative wonders. Cooperation and compromise are essential to achieving cleanup and revitalization. Stakeholders abound, and while they may share the same ultimate goals, their visions for getting there are as varied as they are.

Third-party neutrals may be the solution to unlocking your complex project. Convening meetings, facilitating talks, and mediating between diverse interests -- all tools that facilitators can use to keep brownfields projects on track.

## EPA's Brownfield Facilitation Pilots

EPA provided support to a dozen brownfields projects across the country to find out if facilitation works. The answer is a resounding yes. The experiences at the pilot sites are described in "Evaluating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Facilitation Pilot Projects." The report examines the impact of facilitation and facilitated collaborative decision making on brownfields assessment and redevelopment initiatives.

The report evaluates EPA-promoted facilitation efforts in communities with difficult issues to resolve. As a comparison, it also evaluates facilitation efforts initiated by communities that identified the need for and sought out facilitator support on their own. The evaluation assesses whether, and under what conditions, facilitation improved the decision making processes associated with the 12 nationally supported facilitations and 12 locally initiated facilitations.

### *"Evaluating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Facilitation Pilot Projects"*

is now available on EPA's Brownfields Web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

For more information on whether facilitation may be helpful for your brownfields project, please contact EPA's Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center at 202-564-2922, or visit the CPRC Web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/adr>

## East Palo Alto, CA



East Palo Alto was a community with significant environmental justice concerns and historical distrust and poor relationships among stakeholders. The facilitator for this project was selected by a cross-section of stakeholders before any meetings were convened, and was present through the completion of the process. The facilitator was successful at engaging all representative stakeholders in the process. At the beginning, many stakeholders were unwilling to convey their perspectives in fear of how the information might be shared. The facilitator was able to build trust in the process and encourage people to share their ideas. At the end of nine months, the group identified five possible approaches to redeveloping and reutilizing the 80-acre Ravenswood Industrial Area. Stakeholders found this project to be a model for community problem solving as different factions of the community were able to work through their differences.

The interventions varied widely for the sample projects. In addition to convening, facilitation and mediation, neutral third-party services included: mentoring, coaching and training, planning and implementing multi-stakeholder meetings. Moreover, while some interventions were short-term (covering a span of a few days), others spanned as long as three to four years. In some cases, the facilitators were involved at the beginning of a project, during the convening stage. In other cases, facilitators were engaged only after difficulties were encountered, some as much as two years into the life of the project.

This report should help brownfields stakeholders consider the best way to proceed in initiating a project, how best to use a facilitator, and what to expect from a multi-stakeholder process. The report:

- Explores the process of decision making and consensus building in brownfields redevelopment
- Assesses the contextual, procedural and substantive variables that contribute to effective brownfields consensus building
- Clarifies barriers to effective decision making in brownfields redevelopment projects
- Recommends improvements in consensus building process design and management
- Documents effective uses of facilitators in brownfields redevelopment projects
- Identifies and clarifies “best practices” used by facilitators in these projects

## Big Gem Site, Shenandoah, VA



Neutral facilitators and collaborative decision making experts provided by EPA assisted stakeholders in coming to consensus on a revitalization vision for the 67-acre former iron production facility known as the Big Gem site. EPA's facilitation assistance enabled local stakeholders to devise the strategy and establish the partnerships that led to reuse of the Big Gem site as a park and revitalization of the nearby historic downtown district.

Support provided by the facilitators included:

**Process Design:** Designed the Advisory Board structure with a timeline and clear roles and responsibilities.



**Facilitation:** Provided meeting support by developing agendas and keeping participants focused and on time. The facilitators' neutrality and objectivity added legitimacy to the process.

**Networking/and Partnership Building:** Enabled the community to identify and engage key regional, state and federal partners that had not been involved earlier. Through strategies for targeting and engaging new partners, the Shenandoah Pilot was able to leverage more than \$1.5 million in additional funding for community revitalization.

**Training:** Provided training to community leaders on managing meetings, effective communication techniques, consensus building, mediation and public speaking.